

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE.¹

TO say that this is a delightful book is not nearly enough, for quite apart from its marked literary excellence it embodies—we were almost writing enshrines—the select experience and seasoned reflection of a man of taste and understanding, who has lived and moved for sixteen years among the things that he writes about. It is one of the best books on Indian sport that it has been our good fortune to read, and from the lyrical dedication "To my '450" to the final chapter on weapons and explosives, there is scarcely a paragraph that has not salt and savour.

The author's method is as good as his matter and manner. He gives us, first of all, a pleasing map of his district, with all the physical and administrative features plainly marked. Then in forty-four telling pages he completes the introduction to his country, giving in a few terse and relevant sentences a good general idea of

Having given us our bearings in time and space, the author holds up the mirror, and we follow him and his trusty trackers—Paniyas, Karumbas, and other relic jungle-men—after elephants, tigers, leopards, "bison," bear, "ibex," sambur, and other smaller game. Many new and interesting things he tells us about all these animals, and what is not new he recounts with proper emphasis, and with critical appraisal of the observations and opinions of others. For the elephant, tame or wild, he has an intense admiration: he has watched the whole tragedy of an elephant fight under nature's own conditions, and although he knows the sensation of being charged by an enraged tusker, and of bearing off the spoils of victory, he says: "I never see an elephant without a feeling of regret that the death of even the one I shot can be laid at my door, and nothing would now induce me to shoot another unless he were a confirmed 'rogue,' or in self-defence." He maintains,

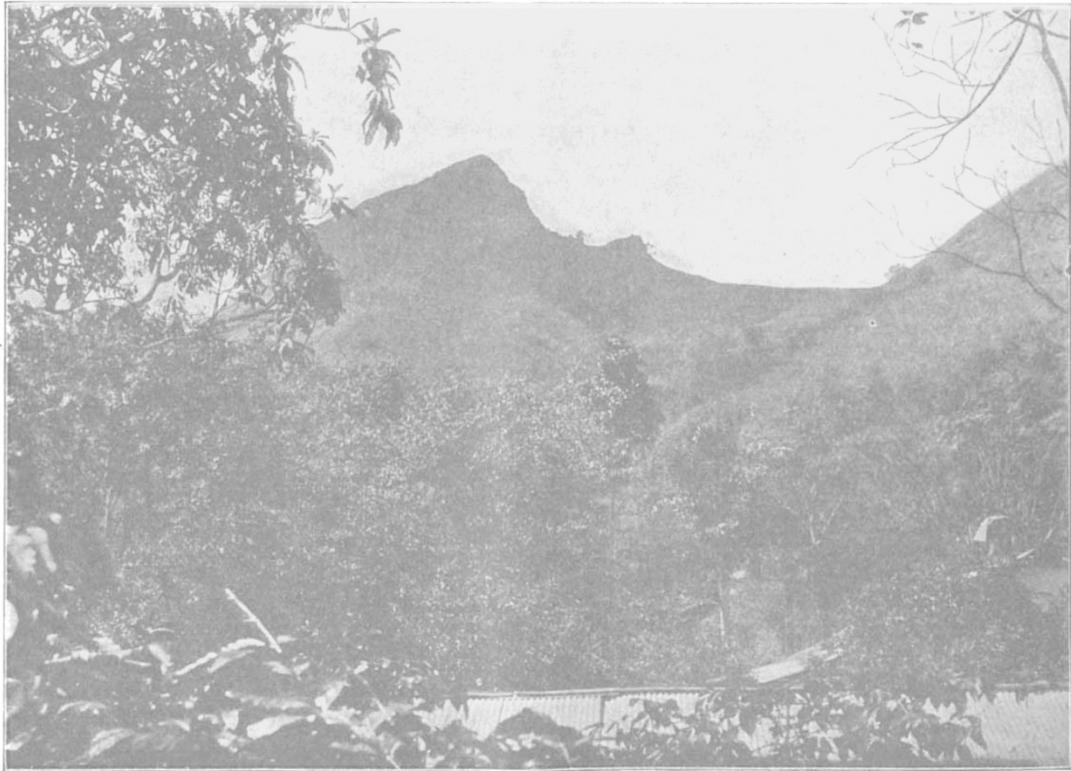


FIG. 1.—Needlerock. From "Sport on the Nilgiris."

its hills, streams, and forests; of its climate and rain-fall; of its political oscillations until it became settled by Europeans and fixed in the fabric of the Madras Presidency; and of its economic ups and downs in the way of coffee-planting and gold-mining. How the latter "industry" has changed the face of certain parts of the district (in south-east Wynaad) is so well pictured that we must quote, or cull, the author's words. After acquiring dozens of planting properties, "the various gold companies . . . took no heed of their fine coffee. . . . Weeds soon overtopped the coffee. . . . Fire got in when the hills were burnt according to the annual custom." And now "for mile after mile nothing but an interminable sea of *dhub-bay* grass marks the site of what were smiling estates. . . . A wilderness made by the abortive search after gold."

¹ "Sport on the Nilgiris and in Wynaad." By F. W. F. Fletcher. Pp. xix+456. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1911.) Price 12s. net.

against Sanderson and Blanford, that the elephant is intelligent above all the beasts of the forest; and he considers—with much justice, we think—that the ease with which this animal when captured can be tamed and taught is a proof, not of dulness, but of that highest form of intelligence which quickly adapts itself to a new environment.

The author has often been at close quarters—both accidentally and by design—with tigers, and he knows these beasts well, in all their ways and moods; and the outcome of all his experience is that, unless it is wounded, the tiger in Wynaad (where the man-eater is unknown) is a "cowardly beast" in the presence of man. He describes, among other things, the way the jungle-men have of netting and spearing tigers. He once saw a tiger that had been killed, at very close quarters, by a single charge of buckshot; and the sight so impressed him (six pellets were found to have entered the brain), that he is inclined to recommend

the buckshot method in dealing with a wounded tiger that has to be followed on foot.

Though in many passages—particularly in a short digression on his tame sambur and his other pets—the author reveals a kindly humour, he is far removed from the drossy sentiment of some of the camera sportsmen who regard all killing as murder. He admits that the sporting instinct (“the killing instinct, if you will”) may be a brutal instinct, but its brutality does not much trouble him if men “refrain from the killing of any inoffensive animal save a male with a trophy worth the taking.”

We like the way in which the author speaks of his native attendants. He always has a good word for them, and if occasionally—for such things are—he is provoked to address a casual hand in terms that are not exactly complimentary, he is always ready to listen to an explanation and to admit extenuating circumstances.

dog appears in quite an innocent and dignified disguise.

There is no index; but as the table of contents is very full, and as each chapter deals with one complete subject, no one who is not bound to formulas will miss it.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS.¹

IN its sixteenth volume, the “Annual” of the British School at Athens has returned to a manageable size for its format, and in this respect is a great improvement on its immediate predecessors.

The remarkable excavation at Sparta has come to a close, and the description of it ends in this volume. The final work of the season of 1909-10, which is described, consisted chiefly in picking up the pieces that remained. The most important of these was the excavation of the remains of the Mycenæan town near

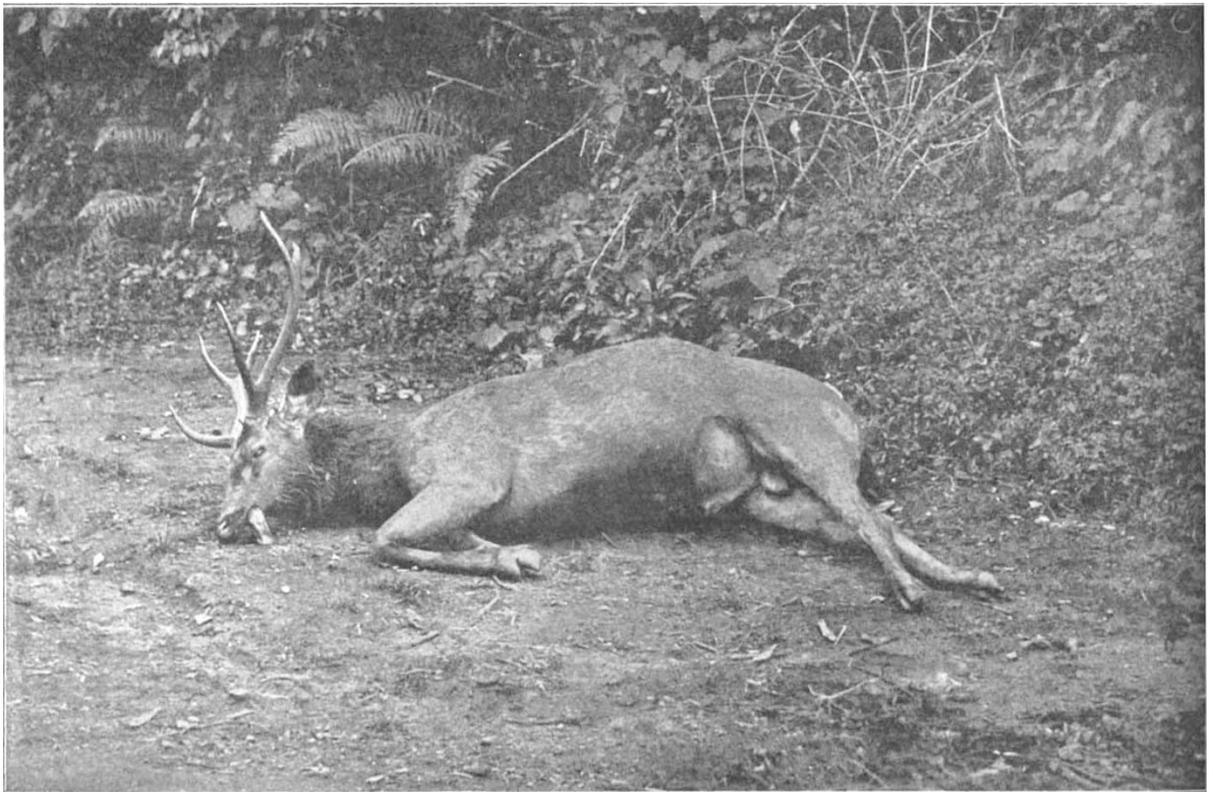


FIG. 2.—The Sambur. From “Sport on the Nilgiris.”

There is so little for even a carping critic to glee at in this excellent book that we almost hesitate to express our surprise that anyone nowadays should talk of malaria as if it were in any direct way due to disturbance of the soil. It is also unexpected to find an author who has so much philosophy in him, and so much sympathy with nature, referring to the mental processes of animals as if they were all a kind of instinct, and appearing to ignore the fact that many illustrious authorities, from Hume onwards, have supported and justified the opinion that the inferences of the higher animals differ from the inferences of the paragon man not in nature, but only in degree.

The illustrations are wonderfully well reproduced, and most of them are extremely good in themselves; but the elephant is far from representing the magnificent creature of the author's election, and the wild

the Menelaion. These are of interest as showing that the valley of the Eurotas was only occupied in late Mycenæan times; no trace of any period before “Late Minoan III.” was found. Of this period houses with typical pottery of that age were discovered. These are described by the director of the School, Mr. R. M. Dawkins, who also sums up the results of the discovery and excavation of the Temple of Artemis Orthia, which has shed such well-deserved lustre on British archæology. This history of the famous sanctuary is traced, from the establishment of the earliest altar on the site by the Dorians, down to Roman times. The importance of this “record” piece of archæological work is evident, and its two

¹ “The Annual of the British School of Athens,” No. xvi. Sessio 1909-10. Pp. ix+343+ xvii plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., n.d.) Price 25s. net.